

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS SPELL PROGRESS FOR STATE

State Pride Should Urge Their Adoption, Says Dr. H. Q. Alexander — Warns Against Standpat Attitude and Counsels for Forward Move

To the Editor:—The constitutional amendments which are to be ratified or rejected by the voters at the November election were prepared by a committee consisting of the Lieut. Governor of the State and five State Senators, the Speaker of the House and eight members of the House and five other reputable men appointed by the Governor of the State.

Both the conservative and progressive elements of the Democratic party were well and ably represented in the personnel of this commission.

The Republican party was represented by some of the most honorable and patriotic leaders of that party in the State.

This writer had the honor to be a member of the commission, by appointment of the Governor, and can testify to the fidelity and painstaking care of the commission in an honest endeavor to arrive at the truth.

The constitutions of every State in the Union were examined with care to gather the wisdom and avoid the mistakes of the law makers of those States.

The commission sought the counsel of many men of well known reputations for wisdom and sagacity, men who had given much thought and investigation to the matters before the commission, and all suggestions were carefully considered.

Then the commission got down to work and threshed out the whole matter and winnowed the pure grain, casting aside the straw and chaff.

Then in the final vote of the members of the commission on the various amendments, they were adopted almost if not quite unanimously. So much for the work of the constitutional commission.

Then the General Assembly met in extra session and after carefully reviewing the report of the commission and making some slight changes, adopted the amendments that are now before the people for ratification.

This is a brief history of the origin of the amendments which I hope will form a part of our organic law after the election in November.

Appeal to Intelligence.

Now then, I want to appeal to the intelligence and honest, unbiased judgment of the voters and tax payers of North Carolina. Is not the work of the constitutional commission, which was reviewed by the General Assembly, entitled to your confidence? You can not question the intelligence of either the commission or the General Assembly. To doubt their wisdom, would be to cast a doubt upon the ability of the people to maintain popular self-government. To dispute the honesty and integrity of purpose of these bodies would be equivalent to an indictment against the best citizenship of North Carolina. Therefore, in all fairness, if the voters can not have all doubt removed by a thorough personal investigation of the whole matter, should not credence be given to the work of men who acted with all possible light and knowledge to direct them?

No Blind Following.

I would not have the reader understand that I would advocate the following of our leaders blindly. Not at all. I would not do it myself. Every citizen should study all public questions and as far as possible inform himself so as to arrive at an intelligent conclusion. But in matters of legislation, and especially that pertaining to the organic law, a large per cent of our people have not the opportunity or the facilities for making a personal investigation. A great deal must be accepted, if at all, on your faith in the honesty and uprightness of the men whom you have chosen to represent you. In other words, to sum up the whole matter, I would urge every voter to inform himself as far as possible on the old, or present constitution, and on the amendments offered, that he may be able to give an intelligent reason "for the faith in him." But if he has not a reasonable understanding of the whole matter, and must be guided in his vote for or against the amendments by the counsel of others, then I say trust your own representatives who have acted unselfishly, as I believe, for the best interest of all the people, rather than follow men who are either blind themselves or who would mislead the people from selfish motives.

Just here let me say that I do not mean to convey the impression that all men who oppose the adoption of the amendment will do so blindly or from selfish motives. Men can not all see alike. They may differ and yet be equally honest. But I do believe that the great majority of those who may oppose the amendments will do so either because they do not understand the reasons for the amendments or what is contemplated by them, or else they will be actuated by a desire to promote class interest rather

than the welfare of all the people.

Six Months School Term.

Now let us consider briefly the substance of the amendments proper. The most of them may be passed over without discussion because there will be no opposition to their ratification. They are of minor importance.

The amendment providing for a minimum term of six months free school each year should be adopted of course. In this progressive age when every vocation and industry are calling for and demanding men of intelligence and efficiency, when the uneducated are sorely handicapped in the race of life because of sharp competition with these better equipped, we would fail miserably in our duty to the boys and girls of our State if we did not incorporate into our organic law the provision which will insure a minimum of six months free school term.

A Needed Change.

The amendment requiring that all local affairs pertaining to towns, townships and counties should be provided for under general statute instead of "the thousand and one" local bills that consume the time of our legislators, should be ratified by all means. There should be no opposition to it.

Every man who has attended on the sessions of our General Assembly knows full well that important State-wide legislation is rushed through with scant consideration during the last ten days of the session because the time of the Assembly has been taken up with petty local bills.

More Pay for Legislators.

The amendment providing for increased pay for our legislators is just and equitable and should be adopted. Under the present constitutional provision, only the man of means, or the man "with an axe to grind" can afford to go to the Legislature. We should not have too many of the former class, and the self-seeking class is not the safest legislator. Of course we have many legislators who are not of the wealthy class, and who are not using the legislature as a stepping stone to reach other favors from the people, but they can ill afford to neglect their private business for legislative honors. With the proposed increase in salary we will be able to draft into the service of the people a better class of legislators on the average.

And, moreover, it is just and right to pay a living wage. It is well known that the present per diem will hardly exceed his necessary expenses.

The Most Important of All.

The most important of all the amendments, and the one which will be the hardest fought, is the amendment providing for, or rather opening the way for readjustment of our system of taxation. It has been said that from taxes and death we cannot escape, yet it is well known by all who have given the subject any study, that wealth in various forms escapes its just proportion of the burdens of taxation. That is the small property-holder pays in proportion to his ability to pay, more tax than the large holder. It is also true that certain classes of property are taxed too high while other kinds of property are proportionately too low. In this way industry, thrift and economy that tends to build up the community is often burdened with taxation, while idle wealth shares in the increased values from community development, to which it contributes nothing, and escapes with very light taxation.

Tax Rate Too High.

It is true also that the present rate of taxation is unreasonably high, and this is made necessary by the low valuation of all property listed, and from the fact that much intangible property is not listed at all because of the high rate. This high rate is not attractive to prospective investors, who, not knowing our very low appraisal, are thereby deterred from making investments within our borders. The wealth goes elsewhere.

Under the present system of taxation it has been all but impossible to establish equalization of taxes between the various counties of the State. This can only be done by segregation of property, the State taxing certain classes of property for State revenue and the counties taxing other classes of property for the benefit of the county.

System is Inefficient.

But the most serious charge against our present system is that it is inefficient, as a revenue producer. It is a reproach to our State government that our "elemosynary" institutions that are crippled for lack of funds, that our educational institutions can not expand to meet the needs of the people and that we are forced to issue bonds to meet running expenses. Intelligent men have despaired of ever seeing the State on a self-sustaining basis under the present system.

The adoption of the taxation

amendment will open the way for the General Assembly to segregate property, specifying certain kinds of property for State taxation and other kinds for county taxation. It will then be possible to classify property so that different classes of property may bear different rates of taxation. It is most unjust and inequitable to impose the same rate of taxation on all classes of property. The many different forms of property are not of the same relative importance to the welfare of the community. Some properties contribute to the common good while others absorb from the community and give back little or nothing.

System is Unjust.

And it is also well known, as already intimated, that large properties are taxed less in proportion than small properties. This is an iniquitous injustice and should no longer be tolerated. To tax poverty more heavily than wealth is outrageous and yet that is being done in every county

in the State. Under the new amendment it will be possible to work out a graduated system of taxes whereby men will be taxed in just proportion to their ability to pay, and that is the only just and equitable basis of taxation. Or to state it another way—equality of sacrifice.

Shall we go forward or backward? Would we have North Carolina in the forefront of the march of progress for a larger and better State life, or would we "let well enough alone," which means to retrograde? Are we willing to allow gross inequalities to continue as at present? Have we a State pride that would prompt us to give our beloved State the best possible government? Do we love justice and equity and the Golden Rule? Have we the courage to do our duty by all the people and to generations yet unborn? "When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice."

Fraternally,
H. Q. ALEXANDER.

THE MELTING POT

LITTLE STORIES THAT BUBBLE UP.

(At National Woman Suffrage Headquarters in Washington City there has been forming for some weeks a collection of gold and silver articles donated by friends of the cause, the name Melting Pot having been given to the collection by the ladies who launched the plan. The following "stories" suggested by incidents occurring in connection with the donations were written by Miss Myrtle L. Bunn, a gifted young North Carolina woman now residing at the National Capital.)

The Anti-Hen.

He was a fierce Anti—the kind that foams at the mouth when a yellow flag is waved—but the Suffragist approached him with mild friendly eyes and such childlike confidence that he didn't feel quite justified in completely annihilating her, so essayed a cold and deadly disapproval. "What am I going to give to your old Melting Pot?" he repeated sarcastically. "I'm no bloated Croesus to be touched for my gold or silver store—I'm only a farmer—just a plain man that hates to see a womanly woman like you mixed up in this business with a lot of—er—old—hens!"

The "old hen" phrase pleased him immediately, it savored of the essence of contumely, and he beamed with an idea that struck him as embodying pure genius. "I can think of nothing so appropriate," he said with icy sarcasm, "as the gift of an old hen from my farm, if you want that for your melting pot—you may take it or leave it."

The mild-eyed Suffragist accepted with the same sweet appreciation she would have used had he offered her a bunch of lilies of the valley.

He delivered the old hen next day—and after she had it in her hands—suffragists don't take risks while the bird is in the bush, you know—she thanked him with a demureness that still had him wondering if she meant anything.

"So nice of you," she breathed, "I have made arrangements to sell it to the corner restaurant at 25 cents per pound. You are not such a hopelessly bad Anti after all. And there are lots worse things in the world than an Anti hen," she conceded. "Honestly, I don't believe I could have sold it to them at all if you had given me an Anti rooster!"

The man, recovering slightly from the thrust, watched her retreating with her trophy. "Well, 'I'll be blowed!" he muttered.

The Folly of Youth.

She unlocked the rosewood desk and pushed the spring of a tiny secret drawer. From a lacquered box she took the ring and as she gazed at it the date inscribed caught her eye.

"Fifteen years ago—has it been so short a time! It has seemed so very, very long. I feel like the grandmother of my own self—of the impulsive girl who wore that ring fifteen years ago."

Through the tears in her eyes she saw the diamond reflect rainbow colors that disappeared when the tear dropped on the polished rosewood desk. Ah—well! Rainbows are but mirages, after all. They promise, then break. She remembered that she had sent the ring back to him five times—and four times he had returned it—without a word—letting it make a silent plea for him.

The fifth time, his mother returned it—after he was dead.

She brushed the tears away and pressed the ring gently to her lips. "Poor foolish, petulant little girls," she murmured. "Poor—boy!" and dropped it into the Melting Pot.

The Duplicity of Mother.

Dear Ladies—so the letter ran—I'm sending these things to your Melting Pot, because they've made me a mighty unhappy woman. The girls say they are lorgettes. They gave 'em to me last Xmas, and said they were awful stylish and that the very swellest old ladies used 'em. I haven't seemed to enjoy life or feel natural since, for if I go to a show the girls want me to use 'em and if I go to church they want me to sing the hymns through 'em, and I feel that

everybody there is looking at me instead of the actresses and the preacher. I guess I wasn't ever intended to be a swell old lady, so please take 'em and melt 'em—they're 14 carat.

(Signed) A Relieved Believer.

P. S.—I do hope it's not much sin—but I've told the girls I lost 'em.

P. S. 2.—If you see they're advertised in the Lost Column, don't you dare send 'em back.

From Out The Depths.

She was young, but her face was hardened with the knowledge of life, and as she let the newspaper fall to the floor she gazed around the gilded splendor of her apartment with a sudden shudder of loathing.

They were calling for gifts of gold and silver, these suffragists—and she had that in plenty—but they were calling for something she couldn't give. They were calling for keepsakes, the keepsakes that were laid away in tender memories, but—dear God—none of her gifts were wrapped with tender memories!

She threw herself, face downwards, on the bed, then with a final sob, arose and stabled across to her dressing table—a table laden with gold and silver store.

"Perhaps," she muttered brokenly, "these may help teach some girl—before it is too late," and she hastily gathered rings and bracelets, gold topped scent bottles, any trinkets that her swollen eyes rested upon.

Thrusting them into her hand-bag, she hastily pinned on her hat and went out.

When she reached the home of the Melting Pot, she hesitated—then went in—at first feeling gratefully that none of the women seemed to realize she was what she was—different from them.

She stood aside and timidly watched others give their tribute to the Melting Pot, then suddenly came the great thought—the knowledge that in this effort for good, she—even she—might help as those other women were helping. For she, knowing the treacherous road so well, could, from her very knowledge, put up danger signs to guide youthful pilgrims.

The color came in her cheeks and a faint light of lost girlhood shone in her eyes as she opened her handbag and emptied its contents. "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner," she whispered.

WALKER FOUND GUILTY.

Recorder Lets Disturber of Church Off With Fine.

(Special to The News and Observer.)

Durham, Aug. 22.—T. B. Walker, who was arrested last Sunday on a multitude of charges, including disturbing religious worship, resisting an officer, and assaulting Sergeant George Proctor with the mouthpiece of a telephone which he grabbed from the wall, was tried this morning before the recorder, his case having been continued from last Monday, and was found guilty of all the counts against him.

Walker was fined \$50 for assaulting the officer, and \$50 for disturbing the worship at the Gospel Tabernacle last Sunday morning. He was let off with the payment of the cost in the other cases against him, but announced that he intended to take an appeal from the decision of the recorder. It was thought by many that Walker would get a sentence on account of the aggravated nature of his offenses, but this was the first time he had been before the court, and he was able to show a good character, so the recorder let him down with a heavy fine.

MRS. KATHERINE D. MEARES

Former President Colonial Dames Dies at Wilmington.

(By the Associated Press.)

Wilmington, Aug. 22.—Mrs. Katherine DeRoset Meares, at one time president of the North Carolina Society of Colonial Dames and great charity worker, died at her home here early this morning at the age of 85. She was the widow of the late Col. Gaston Meares, who served with distinction in the Mexican and civil wars.